

My Life With 40 Parents

*My Life With
40 Parents*

INTIMATE REFLECTIONS
OF A FOSTER CHILD

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This book is dedicated to my mother. The beautiful and loving lady that carried me inside her belly for nine months, so that I could have the opportunity to explore this beautiful planet. You weren't able to raise me, but you gave me an incredible gift, Life. And for that, I'll always be grateful.

To the Pierce's, Tony, Thom, Kathleen, Terry and all the other kind and beautiful souls who accepted me, loved me and guided me throughout this journey.

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“Note To Reader”

The story you are about to read is true. I have tried to recreate events, locales, and conversations from my memories of them. In order to maintain their anonymity, I have changed the names of individuals and places.

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CHAPTER 1
FIRST DAY IN FOSTER CARE



Age: 4

Duration: one month

On October 10, 1985, an anonymous caller phoned the police department to report about a woman with two small children. The caller said she had observed the woman slapping the oldest boy on his bare leg five times, causing redness. I was that boy.

When two child abuse specialists arrived at the lobby of Social Services they noticed my brother and I had bruises on our facial cheeks, buttocks, backs, and arms. One of them asked my mother to step outside so they could chat. My mother said she moved to town five days ago and only had \$2.00. Her parents brought her to Las Vegas, but had kicked her out after the hotel management found out her kids were living there which was against motel policies. She went to the food bank earlier that day and was referred to Social Services for financial assistance.

The other specialist interviewed me. I told her my mother had hit me and that her boyfriend living in the motel with us had yelled at and bruised me. When the specialist asked about her boyfriend, my mom asked for a lawyer. My brother and I were immediately removed from our mother's care and placed in Child Protection Custody.

I don't remember anything about that day or much about the events or abuses that had occurred prior to that day. However, I do have a few memories of the facility my brother and I went to first.

We were placed in a Child Protective Services facility. Youth who lived in this facility were separated into one of six buildings called 'cottages' by their age and sex. My brother was two years younger than me, so we were placed in separate cottages and only permitted to interact with each other during group 'play times.' Once or twice a day, all the youth in the facility gathered together outside to play. I looked forward to this time of day for two reasons, first I got to spend time with my brother, and second, the large clean dumpster filled with toys for us to play with.

CHAPTER 2
LIVING WITH MY DAD



Age: 4

Duration: one month

Shortly after I was taken away from my mother, Child Protective Services contacted my father's mother and notified her that I was in Child Protective Custody. They wanted to know if my father was interested in gaining custody of me. She contacted my father who happened to be living in Las Vegas with his new wife and informed him of the situation.

I had very little contact with my dad since my birth due to my mother's transient lifestyle. But my father and his new wife were happy to have me and picked me up from the facility. Since my brother had a different father, he was not permitted to join me and remained at the facility.

My dad and his wife meet with a representative from the courts to determine what was needed to gain legal custody of me. They were instructed to hire an attorney

and complete all the steps required by the courts. They didn't have much money and secured a \$3,000 loan from a family member to hire an attorney.

At the next court hearing, the judge was concerned that my mother did not have legal representation and appointed a public attorney to assist her with the case. After the court hearing, my father's attorney told him to expect a prolonged legal battle that could cost tens of thousands of dollars. And his chances of winning were slim since fathers rarely won custody battles in Las Vegas at the time.

My father and his wife didn't have the means to fund the custody battle. So they dropped the case and I was returned to the facility. I was happy to see my brother again.

To regain custody of her children, my mother, and her boyfriend agreed to attend Parental Effectiveness Training and individual counseling to address child abuse. She also needed to prove to the courts she could maintain employment and a stable living environment for three months.

During this time she was allowed supervised visitation of her children. I have a brief memory about one of those visits. When I was alone with her, she took me to Kmart to buy me shoes. I remember being so happy to see her.

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This is the only memory I have of my mother. It also may have been the last time I saw her. She never completed the requirements and the courts never heard from her again.

CHAPTER 3
FIRST EIGHT FOSTER HOMES



Ages: 4 through 6
Duration: 4 days to 14 months

After another four days at the facility, Turtle (alias A chosen by my brother for this book) and I were moved to our first foster home. We lived there for about three months before we were moved to our next home. I have very few memories of that time in my life. And over the next two years, we were shuffled through a total of eight foster homes.

There is no documentation about why these placements started or ended. It was, however, the court's wishes to keep Turtle and I living together in the same places whenever possible. At times, there were no homes to take both of us. We were placed in separate homes and then moved together when a home became available to take us both.

The first memory I have of those two years was a foster mom who attempted suicide. I remember the

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ambulance coming to the house and my foster mom being hauled away on a stretcher.

My second memory is a teenage girl who lived in one of those homes. I remember several occasions when she rubbed candy on her private parts and then had my brother and I lick it off.

The next memory is being removed from one of those homes because the couple were having their own children and no longer wanted to care for foster children.

In the next home, I lived with a married couple who took me to their church on the weekends. I didn't like church much until that experience. I remember people singing, dancing and having food and parties after the services. I think that's where I discovered my love for soul food.

The last memory I have during that time in my life was spending a lot of time out in the desert where I built forts and caught lizards.